

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

Claims 1-6 (Canceled).

Claim 7 (Original): A perpendicular magnetic recording medium, comprising:  
a substrate;  
a soft magnetic underlayer formed on the substrate;  
a nonmagnetic layer formed on the soft magnetic underlayer;  
a ferromagnetic recording layer formed on the nonmagnetic layer and having magnetic anisotropy in a direction perpendicular to a surface of the substrate; and  
arrayed soft magnetic dots formed on the ferromagnetic recording layer.

Claim 8 (Original): The perpendicular magnetic recording medium according to claim 7, further comprising a nonmagnetic layer between the ferromagnetic recording layer and the soft magnetic dots.

Claim 9 (Original): The perpendicular magnetic recording medium according to claim 7, wherein a thickness of the soft magnetic dots is 100 nm or less.

Claim 10 (Original): A perpendicular magnetic recording medium, comprising:  
a substrate;  
a soft magnetic underlayer formed on the substrate;  
a nonmagnetic layer formed on the soft magnetic underlayer;

arrayed ferromagnetic recording regions defined by grooves engraved in a ferromagnetic layer formed on the nonmagnetic layer, the ferromagnetic recording regions having magnetic anisotropy in a direction perpendicular to a surface of the substrate; and arrayed soft magnetic dots formed on the respective ferromagnetic recording regions.

Claim 11 (Original): The perpendicular magnetic recording medium according to claim 10, further comprising a nonmagnetic layer between the ferromagnetic recording regions and the soft magnetic dots.

Claim 12 (Original): The perpendicular magnetic recording medium according to claim 10, wherein a thickness of the soft magnetic dots is 100 nm or less.

Claim 13 (Original): The perpendicular magnetic recording medium according to claim 10, wherein a depth of the grooves is smaller than a thickness of the ferromagnetic layer.

Claim 14 (Original): The perpendicular magnetic recording medium according to claim 10,  
wherein the grooves reach the nonmagnetic layer.

Claims 15-17 (Canceled).